

November  
Twenty-fourth  
1942

Mr. William R. Smith  
No. 8 North Fifteenth Street  
Phoenix, Arizona

My dear Mr. Smith:

I have your very nice letter of October twenty-sixth disapproving my action relative to a request that the colored soldiers at Huachuca be given opportunity to volunteer to pick the long staple cotton crop.

I am appreciative of your letter, as I also am glad to hear from all of our citizens, notwithstanding that we may not agree on some particular subject.

I am quite sure there is a misunderstanding relative to my efforts in this particular matter. I realize that many of the soldiers at Huachuca know nothing about cotton picking. On the other hand, I am sure that we will all agree that many are experienced cotton pickers.

With no thought on my part of casting any aspersions on the soldiers at Huachuca, or upon the colored race as a whole, I requested this assistance in our country's time of peril. As you know, the picking of the long staple cotton is vital to the war effort. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy are both insisting that this particular crop be picked and be picked immediately, because upon it depends the number of planes -- bomber and fighter -- that we can put in the air.

In order to accomplish this, employees and employers of stores, banks, mercantile establishments of all kinds, offices of doctors, lawyers, insurance companies have been going into the fields to help pick the crop. Their effort is not for the remuneration received but as a patriotic duty.

Also, I have had the inmates of the State Prison at Florence out picking long staple cotton and they are doing a splendid job, too. Men and women of all stratas of society and of all the races that make up our great citizenship have been contributing

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Wm Smith  
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Picking Cotton



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to this effort. Those employers and employees, men and women, have no objection, because they are doing the same work, a patriotic work, that is also being done by convicts.

As to the soldiers at Huachuca, they would not be furloughed under my request except that they would volunteer to pick this cotton and only those would volunteer who are experienced in that kind of work.

It seems to me that one serves best where he is best qualified to serve, whether in the army or civilian life.

My request was that the boys at Huachuca be given the same privilege that you and I have -- that is if they are experienced in this work and desire to volunteer for it, that they be given a furlough that they, too, can engage in it.

Any work that is vital to our country's war effort is honorable work and no one, whoever they may be, should resent being requested to perform it or resent being placed at it.

At this time I want to thank you for the fine support that you have given me and to express my appreciation. Also do I want you to know that I am always glad to hear from you and always glad to have your comments, suggestions and criticism. I am endeavoring to make Arizona's government truly a people's government and I am always glad to receive information and suggestions, and criticism, too, from the people.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

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